



CONNECTICUT FAMILY SUPPORT COUNCIL
Annual Retreat: Camp Harkness, Waterford
Theme: School Climate and Anti-Bullying
Minutes: October 11, 2012

Meeting Location: Camp Harkness, Waterford

In attendance: Marie Bennett, Sharon Dexler, April Dipollina, Sylvia Gafford-Alexander, Colleen Hayles, Steven Hernandez, Sara Lourie, Linda Mizzi, Mona Tremblay, Lisa Sheppard, *Co-Chair*, Robyn Trowbridge, *Co-Chair*

Excused Absence: Jennifer Carroll, Terry Cote, Tesha Imperati, Karen Hlavac, Miriam Martinez

Unexcused Absence: Ann Gionet, Maureen Smith

Guest/Presenter: Jo Ann Freiberg, Ph.D., Department of Education

Call to Order: 10:25 a.m. by Robyn Trowbridge, *Co-Chair*

By-Laws:

The agenda was changed given that we have a quorum in the morning to review the By-Laws. The By-Laws were reviewed. Several recommended changes were made. Sara Lourie to make those changes to the document and then forward to the Family Support Council Secretary, Marie Bennett.

Mona Tremblay made a motion to accept the By-Laws with the changes made. Lisa Sheppard seconded the motion. Discussion – Sharon Dexler recommended that the date be changed on the By-Laws to indicate today's date (10/11/12). Vote – By-Laws unanimously approved.

Anti-Bullying: Presentation by Steven Hernandez

- Parents/principals perspective – action checklist distributed
- Power point presentation: http://www.cga.ct.gov/coc/bullying_roadmap.htm
- Teaching about positive climate in the school
- A question families should ask is what is the school's policy about electronic information?
- How do students connect to the internet – block sites and monitor what they are looking at?
- People taking videos of other people doing crazy, outlandish, abusive incidents.
- Schools need to show leadership amongst the adults. Conversation with parents – explain that bullying behavior may originate at home – this is what happens at school

Atmosphere of Leadership: policy, response, expectation – no voids – inaction is the void

Copy of the power point from Steve Hernandez and the handout to be forwarded to Marie Bennett for distribution.

Anti-Bullying: Presentation by Jo Ann Freiberg, Ph.D., Department of Education

- 49 states have anti-bullying laws
- Montana does not have one
- Experts agree on one thing – about the abuse of power
- This is all a local matter
- Place a courtesy call to the parent – problem solve

General mean spirited stuff

- Look through the lenses of mean – don't want it to escalate
- Create safe places for children
- Wyoming and Connecticut -- only two states that combine bullying and school climate legislation
- National School Climate Council
- School climate resources website: www.casciac.org
- What are we trying to do on a state level? Use this committee to move the school climate vs. the bullying
- Silent monitoring – expertise of educators together
- Character counts
- What adults do as role models
- Not using the word bullying – positive school climate
- Incident report forms vs. bullying forms – what you said vs. characterization
- Standards and expectations
- Programs about student behavior
 - It's the adults that role model -- not about programs
- Public relations campaign
 - Electronic messages – home/school climate
- Leading reasons why kids are mean
 - Have had bad role models
 - Children who are mean to each other end to feel pretty good about themselves and in study after study demonstrate they have a normal or increased self-esteem.
- All adults in school work as one
- 5 free days of school climate training – anyone can go
 - Find 2 days in a row to receive the training – invite up to 40 people
 - Strength based models
 - Add a session for the Council
 - Adult responsibility/parent engaged
 - Vocabulary on how to talk to our community
 - First Day Plan for sustainability
8:30 – 3:15 Second day
 - Restorative practices – paradigm shift
 - Intersection with special needs
 - Half of the cases that come to us are special needs

Self-Advocates and Prevention for Anti-Bullying: Marie Bennett

Carlos Colon has taken the lead amongst DDS Self Advocates in anti-bullying. Handouts distributed that the Self Advocates use for their presentation. Marie Bennett

Dr, Sugai – UCONN to package the idea of school climate

Special Education -- mediated through Federal and State vs. local

Family Support Network: April Dipollina

- List serve
 - Letter of support went to the Family Support Network from this Council regarding the RFP.
- Parent Mentor (1:1) Support
 - Have a database for different families, situations. Ask the families if they want to speak to a mentor
- Parent Faculty
 - Can do presentations, attending other committees
 - The Family Support Network developed as a recommendation of the Family Support Council
 - Discussed DDS South Region's Creative Housing forum

Next month's agenda

- PATH Goals
- Supporting School Climate -- Planning: Steven Hernandez, Lisa Sheppard, Robyn Trowbridge, Colleen Hayles, Marie Bennett, Linda Mizzi. Lisa Sheppard to call together the subcommittee
- Goals: Recommendations

April Dipollina made motion to adjourn meeting. Steven Hernandez seconded the motion.

Meeting adjourned at 2:15 p.m.

Next meeting: November 8, 2012 at the Office of Protection and Advocacy

Minutes recorded by Marie Bennett, Secretary